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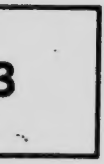

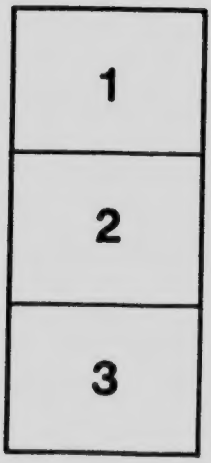

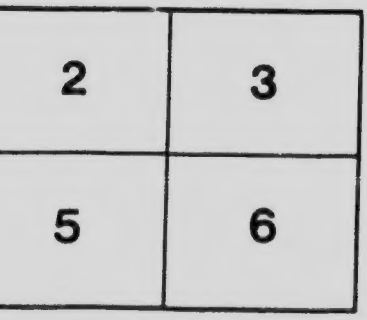

TRAP-NESTS

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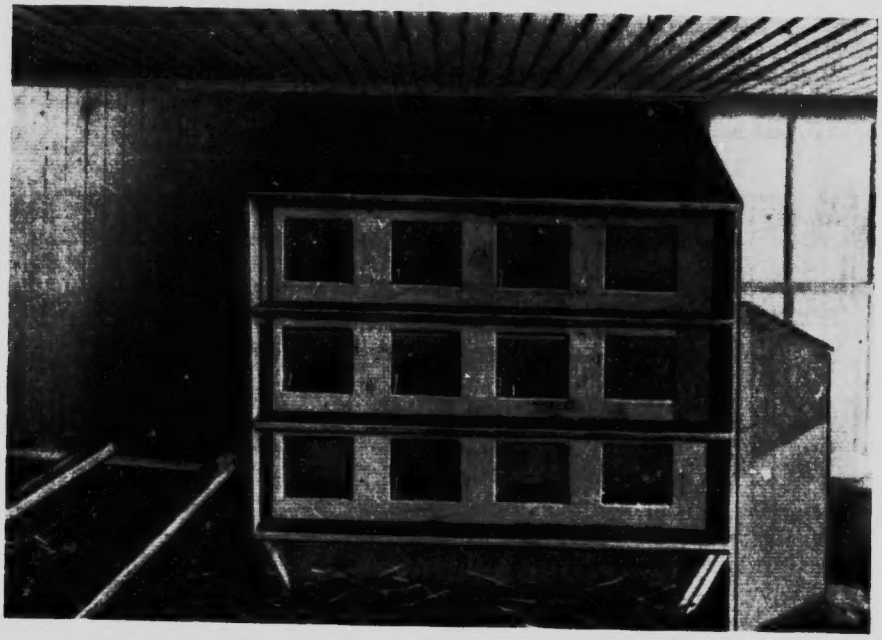
BY

F. C. ELFORD.

For many years the Poultry Division of the Central Experimental Farm has experimented with trap nests, and during that time dozens of different types and styles of trap nests have been used. Out of the whole lot, however, only one is now in commission,—the rest have been discarded as unsatisfactory.

The discarded nests proved unsatisfactory for various reasons; some were too big and took up too much room in the poultry house; some were too complicated and were continually getting out of repair. The main feature in connection with a trap nest is simplicity, and the simpler the better. Many trap nests are so complicated that



A Nest Cabinet.
The nests may be arranged in the form of a cabinet, and should be made in movable sections that can be removed for cleaning.

it almost requires a mechanic to set them up and operate them. Others are noisy and frighten the pullets, but the chief fault is that they do not trap, and the trap nest that will not trap is worse than no trap nest at all.

The most satisfactory nest we have used up to now is described in this bulletin. It is convenient in size, simple in construction, easy to handle, and the surest in

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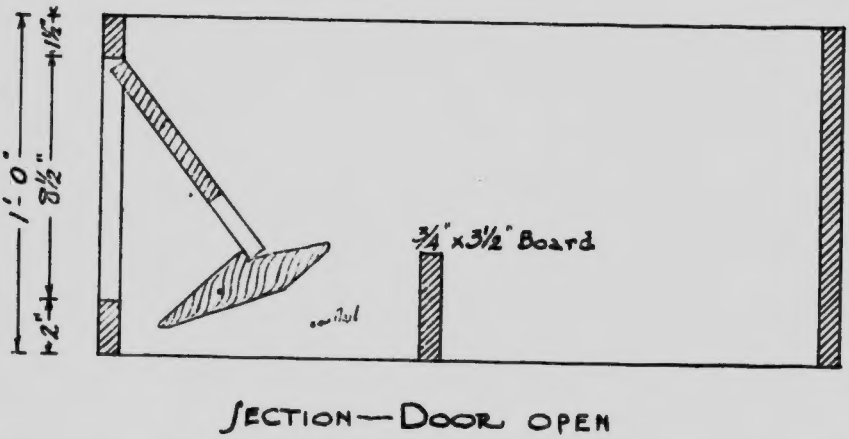
trapping of any style that has been used on the farm. In addition to this it takes very little material and only a short time to construct.

What is a Trap Nest?—A trap nest is a nest with a door so arranged that when it is set the hen can enter the nest and the act of entering springs the trap or door so that it falls and confines the hen to the nest where she has to remain until she is released. When the hen is let out the trap is again set and is ready for another hen.

Who should use Trap Nests.—It is doubtful if the ordinary farmer who is not doing special breeding should consider the installment of trap nests. Trap nests require at least four or five visits each day to release the hen, record the egg and reset the trap. If any attempt is to be made to improve the stock by breeding from the best it means marking the eggs, enclosing them in pedigree trays before hatching in such a way that the chicks can be identified when they come out, and also keeping a continuous record of the chicks throughout their lives and from one generation to another.

This is too much for the ordinary farmer or poultryman to look after, but for the specialist breeder and the man who breeds for egg production and who has the time and the inclination to carry out his record work, the trap nest is absolutely essential, and is the only true indication of what individual hens produce.



TRAP NEST. SIDE VIEW.

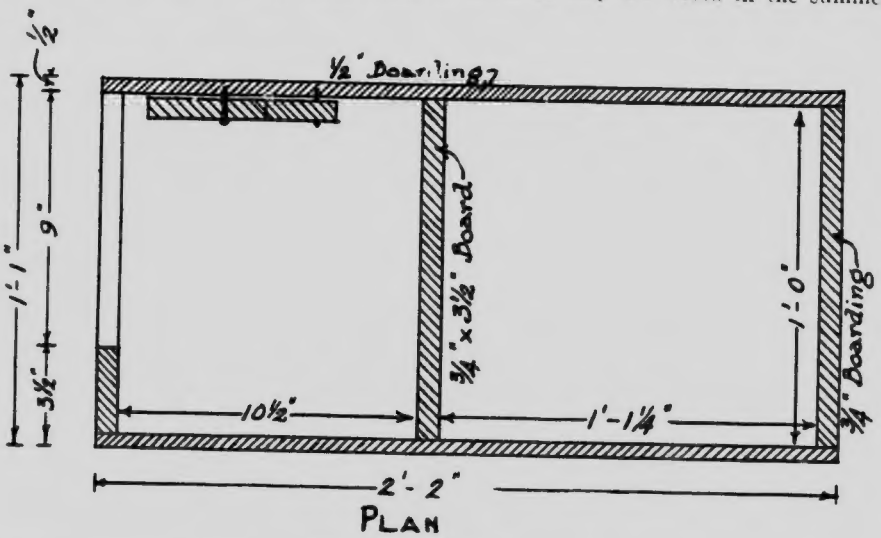
Section of Trap Nest.—Showing door "set."
The hen entering raises the door allowing the trigger to drop on to nail; as the hen passes on to the nest the door closes and locks by trigger point.

Farmers can breed up the laying qualities of their flocks by using the trap nests from November the first to, say, March first or until they become too busy in the spring. Take the birds that lay well during this time and mate them with a good vigourous male of a laying strain, and from these only, take eggs for breeding. Or, if this is not practicable, buy each year a male bird from a good laying strain and mate him with the best hens of the flock. It is poor practice to breed the whole flock, good and bad, but the purchase of such a cockerel each year pays, as the influence of the male blood is more than half in breeding for h. ' production. Be sure he comes from a reliable high laying strain and go back to th same breeder each year for the males.

This is the practice through which the Poultry Division of the Experimental Farm hopes to assist the flocks throughout the Dominion. At the Central Farm

laying strains are being established, cockerels from these strains are being supplied the branch farms and experimental stations where they will be bred to the females kept there, and cockerels from these matings will be sold to the farmers in the vicinity.

Additional Uses of the Trap Nest.—The trap nest also shows the time of the year the eggs are laid. A hen that lays 100 eggs may be more valuable than another that lays 150 because of the time of the year at which she lays them. Eggs in the winter time are worth from two or three times as much as they are worth in the summer.



TRAP NEST. TOP VIEW.

The screw (A) must be in the position shown to overbalance and ensure the trigger dropping promptly when released by raising door.

The trap nest shows conclusively not only the hen that lays the largest number of eggs, but the hen that lays the largest number of eggs at the most profitable time of the year. By the daily handling of the hen the attendant gets acquainted with the individual bird. Broodiness, sickness, injuries, etc., are noted at the start and steps taken to guard against them. Hens that lay undesirable shaped eggs, small, or wrinkled eggs, can be detected and weeded out. There is an occasional hen that enters the nest regularly but that never lays an egg, and only the trap nest will spot her.

How many Nests.—In using trap nests, a sufficient number must be provided or the hens will lay on the floor. As a rule during the heavy laying season there should be at least one nest to every four hens. During the slacker periods, more hens might be allowed to the nest, but it is important that these nests be visited frequently, especially in the forenoons when most of the hens lay. It is well to release the hens at least three times before noon, and it is also a good plan when pullets are put into laying quarters for the first time that the trap nest be on hand before the pullets seek elsewhere for a nest. When the young pullet has found a nest for herself in the corner or under the drop board and the trap nest is afterwards introduced, it is very difficult to get her to leave her own nest and go to the trap, and it is also a problem to get hens that are persistently laying in the straw to take to the trap nest. Nothing but perseverance on the part of the attendant will accomplish this and he should, whenever he finds a hen laying outside the nest, pick her up and put her in, whether she has